THE HOME CIRCLE

Ode to Death.*

[Hymn sung at the consecration of Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, S. C.]

Whose was the hand that painted thee, O death!
In the false aspect of a ruthless foe,
Despair and sorrow waiting on thy breath—
O gentle Power! who could have wronged thee so?

Thou rather should'st be crowned with fadeless flowers,
Of lasting fragrance and celestial hue;
Or be thy couch amid funereal bowers,
But let the stars and sunlight sparkle through.

So, with these thoughts before us, we have fixed
And beautified, O Death! thy mansion here,
Where gloom and gladness—grave and garden—mixed,
Make it a place to love, and not to fear.

Heaven! shed thy most propitious dews around!
Ye holy stars! look down with tender eyes,
And gild and guard and consecrate the ground
Where we may rest, and whence we pray to rise.

—Henry Timrod.

Is the College Boy Educated?

In his baccalaureate sermon to the graduating classes of Columbia University, the Rev. Dr. George A. Gordon, of Boston, talked of "the educated youth, with his gifts, his intellectual habits, his culture, his superiority over thousands." How many such youths do the colleges produce? Mighty few. Take a composite photograph of the American undergraduate, and the result is no budding Emerson, no ascetic burner of the midnight oil, but a jolly, noisy, rather queerly dressed, highly clannish young man or boy, whose greatest enthusiasm is for athletic sports. He has wide "culture" in such various and difficult subjects as briarwood pipes, bull-terriers, amateur photography, scarf-pins, sign-collecting, and variety shows. His art-gallery is a collection of pictures of actresses, goddesses whom he worships ignorantly and from afar—unless he marries a chorus girl, and scandalizes his doting parents. His literature is the "sporting page" and the harmless, unnecessary contemporary novel. His science is boxing or golf or tennis or lacrosse. His heroes are not Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, but those greatest men in the world, the Captain of the Eleven, the Captain of the Crew, the Captain of the Nine. He is a perfectly good fellow. He is a simple, manly fellow, with a very apparent down on his face of sophistication. But he is not an "educated youth," except in so far as he knows that he isn't.—Everybody's Magazine.

*This is No. 133 of our series of the World's Best Poems, selected especially for The Progressive Farmer by the Editor. In this series selections from the following authors have already appeared: Burns, Bryant, Mr. and Mrs. Browning, Byron, Goldsmith, Holmes, Kipling, Lanier, Longfellow, Lowell, Markham, Macaulay, Milton, Moore, Poe, Pope Tennyson. Fimrod, Riley, Ryan, Scott, Shakespeare, Snelley, and others.

A Forgotten North Carolina Hero.

A reunion is to be held at Fort Fisher, on the 12th of August, of the survivors of the Confederates who were captured there on the 15th of January, 1865.

This is eminently right and proper, for the heroism of the garrison of that famous fort should be perpetuated to the remotest generation. The gallant survivors have just cause to be proud of their heroic defense, and will no doubt meet again on that historic spot with mingled pride and sadness.

The bombardment of Fort Fisher was the heaviest since the invention of gun powder. Many acts of heroism in its defense have never received the praise which they so much deserve. Indeed they are known to very few persons. For instance, scarcely any one has heard of the heroism of Private Christopher C. Bland, of Company K, Thirty-sixth North Carolina Regiment. The flagstaff was unprovided with halyards and when the order was given to raise the battle flag young Bland promptly volunteered to do so. He seized the flag and began climbing the staff under a heavy fire from the enemy's fleet. Undismayed by the shrieking of shells which fell around he climbed the staff and fastened the flag at the top. Just as he came down a shell tore loose one end of the flag, and at once this young hero again climbed the staff, while shells fell around him almost as thick as hail, and again fastened the flag in its place, and strange to say he escaped unwounded. History has taught every schoolboy the heroism of Sargeant Jasper at Fort Moultrie, when its flag staff was shot down by the British fleet, but not a schoolboy has probably ever heard of this more daring feat of Christopher C. Bland.—Chatham Record.

Insects and Flowers.

The fact is that most of the beautiful flowers which attract our attention during the summer could not get along at all without their friends the insects, and no doubt the insects would fare very badly without the flowers.

However, it is the flowers in which we are most interested just now. In order that the seeds of one of these flowers may set, or as the botanists say, "become fertile," it is necessary that its stigma be dusted with some of the yellow or brown dust called pollen, usually from the anthers of some other flower. This pollen must be carried to it in some way, otherwise the seeds will never ripen. In some cases the wind plays the part of messenger, and blows the pollen from one flower to another, but most of the attractive flowers we see are so made that insects alone can deliver the dust to them in the proper manner. Some flowers are so formed that only one particular kind of insect can accomplish their fertilization. For example, the purple clover could not exist without the bumblebee, and where there are no bumblebees no purple-clover seed is ripened. In New Zealand, for instance, where there are no bumblebees, it is necessary to sow a fresh crop of clover every year, with seed imported from England.

Flowers being thus dependent on certain insects, they naturally make every effort to insure the visitation of those species which are necessary to their existence. The insects themselves are not generous in the least, and they certainly would not carry pollen for nothing if they could help it. So each flower makes a bid for their services, usually offering honey in payment; and for fear they might not know just where to come for the honey, bright petals or sepals are flung out like banners to attract their attention. Often the blossoms exhale an attractive perfume as an additional guide to the hungry messengers. Attracted by these signs, the insects crawl in to feed, and the flowers are so cunningly arranged that it is impossible to get at the honey without becoming dusted with the pollen. At the next place the insect stops for lunch he shakes off some of this dust upon the stigma of the flower, and the desired result is accomplished.— August Woman's Home Companion.

Courses of Reading for Summer Moods.

Courses of reading must be taken as suggestive rather than arbitrary, so wide are the diversities of taste and so far apart are the interests and educational opportunities of a great company of readers. These short lists have been made in response to numerous requests, and have no more ambitious aim than to suggest orderly reading in two or three directions suitable for vacation moods and opportunities. Those readers who would like to make or renew their acquaintance with English fiction at successive periods in its representative works may find pleasure and profit in the following novels. An admirable preparation for this course is Mr. Perry's "Study of Prose Fiction":

Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield;" Mrs. Radcliffe's "The Mysteries of Udolpho;" Miss Austen's "Sense and Sensibility;" Scott's "The Heart of Midlothian;" Miss Bronte's "Jane Eyre;" Thackeray's "Vanity Fair;" Dicken's "David Copperfield;" Trollope's "Barchester Towers;" George Eliot's "The Mill on the Floss;" Stevenson's "Kidnapped" and "Prince Otto;" Hardy's "The Woodlanders;" Barrie's "The Little Minister;" Mrs. Humphry Ward's "David Grieve."

A selection from American fiction in chronological order might include:

Irving's "The Sketch Book;" Cooper's "The Last of the Mohecans;" Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter;" Poe's Tales; Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" Harte's "The Luck of Roaring Camp;" James's "The American;" Howell's "The Rise of Silas Lapham;" Cable's "Old Creole Days;" Miss Wilkins's "A Humble Romance;" Miss Jewett's "The Country of the Pointed Firs;" Allen's "The Kentucky Cardinal" and "Aftermath;" Page's "In Ole Virginia;" Garland's "Main-Traveled Roads."

A few volumes of essays are always acceptable and may be re-read many times with increasing pleasure:

Lamb's "Elia;" Stephen's "Hours in a Library;" Arnold's "Essays in Criticism;" Emerson's "Society and Solitude;" Smith's "Dreamthorp;" Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero Worship;" Brown's "Rab and His Friends;" Irving's "Bracebridge Hall;" Van Dyke's "Little Rivers;" Hamerton's "Intellectual Life;" Lowell's "My Study Windows."—Hamilton W. Mabie, in Ladies' Home Journal.

The King Was Extinguished.

Sultan Abdul Hamid, always afraid of his own life, never forgets to impress upon the minds of his subjects that sovereigns are immortal, in so far that their lives can never be taken by an assassin.

There is an old Turkish superstition to this effect, and Abdul wants his faithful followers to clearly understand that it would be absolutely useless to try to murder him.

When, therefore, King Alexander, of Servia, was murdered, the Sultan's orders went out to all the papers in Turkey that, chronicling this event, they must use this expression: "The King of Servia was extinguished last night while Queen Draga succumbed to a revolution of blood."

It is to be hoped that all vicious Turks with sultanicidal intention will understand that their master is immune from swords and bullets.—Nashville American.

Mr. Bryan's First Bow.

William J. Bryan went to Lincoln, Nebraska, to practice law with no assets but a thoroughly legal education, a large native ability and a talent for public speaking.

He made a speech or two in Lincoln, and was then pressed into service by the local Democratic committeee for work in a State campaign. He was told to go to a village about twenty miles from Lincoln one night and address the populace on the issues of the day.

Mr. Bryan drove over. It was a long, cold ride. When he arrived at the village he was escorted to the district school building where the meeting was to be held. He found that a pompous Irish citizen was to preside.

The young lawyer thought it was no more than fair that he should get an advertisement out of the meeting inasmuch as he was to pay his own expenses. He asked the chairman to say, in announcing him: "Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. William J. Bryan, the rising young attorney from Lincoln, will now address you."

The chairman did not grasp the idea. Mr. Bryan took him out behind the school-house and coached him. After ten minutes' work the chairman seemed letter perfect.

The meeting began. The local orators had their say. Then it was time for Mr. Bryan. The chairman looked at him. Bryan nodded. The chairman stammered, stuttered, and Mr. Bryan prompted: "Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. William J. Bryan, the rising young attorney of Lincoln ——"

The chairman tried to remember. He couldn't. Then, with a mighty effort he roared: "Ladies and gentlemen. Mr.—Mr.—Mr. O'Brien will spake!"—Saturday Evening Post.